



Congressman Tim Bishop

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**CONTACT: JON SCHNEIDER
(202) 225-3826**

BISHOP HOLDS TRANSPORTATION FORUM TO IMPROVE TRAFFIC, SAFETY ON LI'S ROADS

Brings National Leader to Long Island to Discuss Solutions

Holtsville, NY—Traffic and unsafe roads are two facts of life that most Long Islanders have resolved to live with. Yesterday, at a transportation forum, Congressman Tim Bishop (D-Southampton) urged steps to do something about it. Bishop was joined by one of the nation's leading transportation experts, Congressman James Oberstar (D-Minnesota), Ranking Member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Bishop serves on that committee as well.

At the forum, Bishop and Oberstar heard testimony from Smithtown Supervisor Pat Vecchio and Suffolk County Legislator Brian Foley, community activists, business leaders, labor leaders and other concerned members of the community about the problems that exist on Long Island's roads and how best to improve the situation.

"Two facts stick out like sore thumbs—too many people are dying on our roads and we are spending far too long in traffic," Bishop said. "Approximately 275 Long Island drivers die on the roads each year. And all of us spend too much of our time stuck in traffic."

Bishop and Oberstar agreed that there will be an opportunity to improve transportation on Long Island with the upcoming reauthorization of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), the legislation that authorizes the level of federal funding for federal highway, highway safety and transit programs.

Acknowledging the concerns of community groups and the reality that Long Island cannot just widen its roadways to meet transportation needs, Bishop urged innovative thinking. Specifically, he urged investment in carefully targeted road improvement projects, at intersections and arteries with particularly egregious congestion and safety records. This will involve improved signalization and signage, additional lanes, improved drainage and maintenance of pavement conditions.

Bishop also urged greater investment in mass transit to take cars off our roads. Long Island can get improved mass transit through projects like improved intermodal facilities, completion of the East Side Access project, building a third line on the LIRR and improved bus service to rail stations.

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"I will promote projects that improve safety and encourage alternate modes of transport, to improve the flow of traffic on all of our region's roads," Bishop said.

Bishop also heard testimony from Long Island business and labor leaders who discussed how the reauthorization of TEA-21 can improve our region's economy.

"Our transportation system, both within the Island and connecting us to other areas, is crucial to our continued economic success," said Matt Crosson, President, Long Island Association. "The reauthorization of the federal transportation bill will decisively affect our transportation infrastructure-- and our economy-- for decades to come."

Leading labor leaders who testified were Jack Caffey, President, Long Island Federation of Labor, Jack Kennedy, President, Nassau-Suffolk Building Trades, and Bill Duffy, Local 138-Operating Engineers.

"Transportation investment does not only create jobs for the workers building roads or bridges," Caffey said. "Improved roads and public transportation networks create favorable conditions for nearby business investment and increase the ability of workers to access jobs in different areas of the Island."

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